THE CALL TO CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

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The Call to Christian Stewardship

By

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Dedicated

To MY BRETHREN OF THE MINISTRY AND LAITY OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH SOUTH

FOREWORD

THE call to be a Christian steward in the use of property is involved in the call to live a true Christian life. Martin Luther said: "Every man needs two conversions: the first of his heart and the second of his pocketbook." The disposition to give is implanted in every truly regenerated heart, but what proportion each convert should give is a problem of the head, and can only be solved by a study of the principles of Christian Stewardship. The discovery of these principles, followed by the determination to be guided by them, may mark such an epoch in one's life as to stand out in experience like "a second conversion." Or by means of the right religious education on the subject from early life the young disciple may come into the practice of these principles in a natural, normal way.

Have you found yourself on Stewardship, or are you wandering in the wilderness of perplexity and indecision? Have you considered this sacred doctrine an indefinite something spoken of in the Bible, but one of

those vague parts which is a mystery that will be revealed only in the world to come? Have you faced the tithing issue fairly and squarely? Have you reached a definite decision to pay a tenth of your income to God as the minimum?

I submit for your consideration this plain, simple, clear-cut proposition: *It is either a good thing to be a tither, or it is not.* Which is true, and how can we find out? In the following pages I have endeavored to throw sufficient light on the mooted question of the tithe to satisfy the average seeker after truth and leave the earnest disciple without excuse concerning this duty, as the beginning and not the end of Stewardship. If it is a good thing to be a tither, I ought to be one, you ought to be one, and we ought to get everybody we can to join us in this good thing.

One day as I stood on the little narrow bridge in front of the Niagara Falls on the American side, I saw the two arcs of a small rainbow come together only a few feet away and form the complete circle. It was a beautiful and inspiring spectacle. Stewardship completes the circle and makes the well-rounded Christian character. The life

of Stewardship is the life of holiness; it is the life of sanctification. If you had the power to make the Church, in one night, what you would like for it to be, what kind of Church would you make it? A praying Church? A working Church? An orthodox Church? A soul-winning Church? Or what? I would make it all these in one: *a Church of one hundred per cent Christian stewards.*

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The CALL TO CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

CHAPTER I

THE LEGAL ROUTE TO TITHING STEWARDSHIP; OR, THE VOICE OF COMMAND

A NEW expression has come into use in recent years. It is the term "tithing stewardship." It means the stewardship that is acknowledged and expressed by the payment of the tithe. It implies that stewardship is more than tithing, but that tithing is a distinct part of faithful stewardship.

A tithing steward is one who manifests his faith in God's ownership and man's stewardship by paying the tithe, as distinguished from another who, professing to believe in stewardship, says, "All I have is the Lord's," but fails to evidence his sincerity by systematically setting aside a definite portion of his income for the kingdom.

There are four ways to go to New York, the metropolis of America: the overland

route, by water, by rail, and by air. There are likewise four different routes men may travel in becoming tithing stewards. Each one of these routes stands for a process of reasoning or array of argument by which a class of people is influenced to form the habit of tithing.

"To every man there openeth
A way, and ways, and a way,
And the High Soul climbs the High Way,
And the Low Soul gropes the Low,
And every man decideth
The way his soul shall go."

The way that winds round and round through the Valley of Indecision and never gets out is a low way, while any way that leads to stewardship, like any road that leads to heaven, is a good way and one we had better take rather than not go.

Some come the legal route. This is an ancient way. It was beaten out by travelers in the dim dawn of history, travelers who followed the markings made by the Almighty himself. It was traversed by the patriarchs of Israel. Moses gave it due recognition and sanction. The prophets walked in it. And Christ approved it.

The Origin of the Separated Portion

The principle of the separated portion dates back to the Garden of Eden. It appears in the first command God gave to man: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." (Gen. ii. 16, 17.) The separated portion—the forbidden fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden—was the occasion of Satan's first attack. (Gen. iii.1-5.) It was partaking of the separated portion in violation of the divine command that brought the fall and the curse of God upon the human race. (Gen. iii. 16-19.)

The First Offerings

The story of the first offerings in history is found in Genesis iv. 3-7. Abel's offering was acceptable to God, but Cain's was not. Why? To be acceptable an offering must not only be of the right quality but also of the right quantity. An unworthy portion would not be looked upon with favor by the Almighty. Abel gave of the firstlings of his flock, while Cain's offering seems to have been an indis-

criminate collection. In contrasting the two offerings the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews intimates a difference in quantity also: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent [a larger, more abundant, literally a "fuller"] sacrifice than Cain." (Heb. xi. 4.)

The Council of Neville, A.D. 590, understood that the sin of Cain consisted in his withholding in a faithless, covetous spirit a portion of the tithe.

Abraham's Example

The first mention of tithing in the Bible is the instance of Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of God: "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. *And he gave him a tenth of all.*" (Gen. xiv. 18-20.)

The amount of the separated portion is here designated for the first time. It is the tenth. It was a common practice among

ancient warriors to tithe the spoils of war. No doubt Abraham was familiar with this custom. But his act in paying the tenth had a far deeper meaning than that of the heathen warrior. It was an act of genuine devotion in the worship of the one true God. *It was an act of precedent.* This is apparent from the reference in Hebrews to this event of outstanding significance: "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. . . . Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him." (Heb. vii. 1-4, 9, 10.)

Jacob's Vow

Jacob is the first person on record to enter into a tithing covenant with God. The account of this renowned covenant occurs in Genesis xxviii. 20-22: "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace: then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

Becoming keenly conscious of his own dereliction as a result of his wonderful vision, the grandson resolved to emulate the example of his pious and godly grandfather by taking up the practice of tithing in conformity to a recognized religious custom and duty.

The Law of the Holy Tithe

Moses formulated into a statute what had been handed down from father to son for many generations. At the close of the book of Leviticus, after many new statutes both

moral and ceremonial had been given, the ancient law of the tithe was added as a constant reminder and for preservation and emphasis. "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord. . . . And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." (Lev. xxvii. 30, 32.)

Was not this statute an afterthought of Moses? No. The last verse of the last chapter of Leviticus says: "These are the commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai." (Lev. xxvii. 34.) Beyond question, then, the law of the tithe was included in the laws which God gave to Moses when the kingdom of Israel was established. However, the paying of the tithe at that time was not an innovation. This commandment was a confirmation of a patriarchal practice, and one that existed from the beginning. It was one of God's primal laws to man, and has always been foremost among the prescribed methods by which he would have us ac-

knowledge him as Lord of Life and give tangible proof of our sincerity.

The first or holy tithe must not be confused with the tithe that was used to provide means for the Jewish feasts (Deut. xiv. 23-27), or that was set aside every third year for the poor (Deut. xiv. 28, 29). There was no exemption from the law of the holy tithe. Even the Levites themselves who were the recipients of this tithe as their inheritance (Num. xviii. 21, 24) were required to tithe that inheritance and also their gifts. "Ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the Lord of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the Lord's heave offering to Aaron the priest. Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the Lord, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it." (Num. xviii. 28, 29.)

When Israel grew careless and forgetful of this law, faithful kings and prophets warned her and called her back to its observance. The inspired chronicler says of Hezekiah that "he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they

might be encouraged in the law of the Lord." (2 Chron. xxxi. 4.) The result was a most remarkable revival in tithing. (2 Chron. xxxi. 5-10.) When the Israelites under the leadership of Nehemiah returned from their captivity to rebuild Jerusalem and to re-establish the temple worship, they took a solemn oath to keep all the commandments which God had given them through Moses, including the law of the tithe. (Neh. x. 29-39.) In language that is strong and unmistakable the prophet Malachi pointed out that disobedience to the law of the tithe was the cause of Israel's apostasy in his day, and that reformation in this regard was the sure and only way to the restoration of the divine favor and blessing. (Mal. iii. 7-12.)

Is the Law of the Tithe Binding in the New Dispensation?

When we come to the New Testament we find no direct command to tithe and no repetition of the law of the tithe as such. On this account are we to disregard this law today, considering it a dead letter, or are we to regard the duty it enjoins as binding still? In endeavoring to solve this problem we

will do well to keep in mind the following statement of Gladstone, the great English lawyer and statesman: "To constitute a moral obligation it is not necessary that we have a positive command. Probable evidence is binding as well as demonstrative evidence; nay, it constitutes the greatest portion of the subject matter of duty." There are four arguments which tend to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the law of the tithe has not been abrogated, but is in effect now:

1. From a careful study of Biblical and extra-Biblical history it appears that the first tithe of land, or tree, or flock, or herd has been holy unto the Lord from the very beginning of time. Tithing did not commence with the Jewish economy: why should it end with it? It was not restricted to one people nor to the Land of Promise. There are glimpses of it to be found in the primeval and patriarchal dispensations long before the organization of the Hebrew Commonwealth. How are we to account for this? The tithe did not just happen. Back of the practice there must have been a law, and back of that law was God. Like

the Sabbath it was divinely ordained. It was the all-wise Creator who instituted both for the good of his creature, man. The ratios of one-seventh of our time and one-tenth of our increase were not humanly devised. Why do we not observe every tenth day for rest and worship and set aside one-seventh of our income as holy unto the Lord? Because the Almighty in the primal laws of the Sabbath and the tithe has ordered it otherwise. The law of the tithe could not have been a part of the Jewish ceremonial because it was binding upon the race before the law of Moses was handed down. It antedates and was incorporated in the Mosaic code, but it survives the ceremonial and ritual elements of that code. It was one of the original commandments and abides throughout all dispensations.

2. A law remains a law until it is annulled. When a statute is once enacted and entered upon the books of a nation, it must continue to be a statute of that nation until it is repealed. This is a ruling that obtains in all the courts of the civilized world. For the law of the tithe to stand in this dispensation it is not necessary that it be repeated, but

only that it be not countermanded in the New Testament. There is not a single instance of the reversal of this law in the New Testament scriptures, nor a single passage that revokes or rescinds it. Instead of abrogation we find fulfillment, and instead of repeal we find reënforcement.

3. *The attitude of Christ.* In considering his attitude we must remember that he lived in a day when the tithing system was firmly established. After the Babylonian captivity the Jews became more and more punctilious about the outward observances of the law. To teach or further emphasize tithing then was unnecessary, but to rebuke hypocrisy was needful. There are three sayings of Christ which reveal his attitude toward the tithe:

(1) In the Sermon on the Mount he said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot [the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet] or one tittle [the minute projecting line which distinguishes certain of the Hebrew letters from others] shall in no wise pass from the

law, till all be fulfilled." (Matt. v. 17, 18.) He read fuller meaning into every law of the Old Testament. By precept and example he preached obedience to the law, not merely in letter but likewise in spirit. He himself was more than a tither: he was a steward.

(2) In his rebuke of the Pharisees for passing over judgment, mercy, faith, and the love of God, though they scrupulously tithed even garden herbs, Jesus declared: "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." (Luke xi. 42; Matt. xxiii. 23.) Was he not treating the law of the tithe lightly in this scripture? No. He was endeavoring to show the Pharisees that they could not really observe the law while neglecting its spirit. He was here pointing out that the payment of the tithe should in itself be a pledge of faithfulness to the larger stewardship of law, justice, and mercy, and that failure in these is in reality a violation of the tithing covenant. With all their faults there was one thing in the Pharisees that the Saviour could commend, and that was their tithing. He went on record not only as indorsing obedience to the law of the tithe, but as considering it a duty.

(3) "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees," he warned his disciples, "ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 20.) The Pharisees tithed, they kept the letter of the law: we must do this and more—we must keep its spirit as well. They observed the part for the whole and substituted outward form and ostentatious acts for the hidden man of the heart. As the part is not the whole, so tithing is not the whole of stewardship. But as the whole includes the part, so stewardship includes tithing We may keep the letter of the law without fulfilling its spirit, but we cannot keep the spirit of the law without fulfilling the letter. We may, like the Pharisees, be tithers and not be stewards, but we cannot be stewards without being tithers.

4. *The position of Paul.* Numerous utterances of the great apostle to the Gentiles lead us to infer that he was a tither and more, and that he considered the law of the tithe comprehended in the larger stewardship of the gospel, which made it effective:

(1) His Hebraic birth, training, and char-

acter indicate that he was a tither. "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee." (Acts xxiii. 6.) "After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee." (Acts xxvi. 5.) "Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." (Phil. iii. 6.)

(2) In his defense before Felix he testified to his complete acceptance of all the Jewish Scriptures, which embody the law of the tithe: "This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all the things which are written in the law and in the prophets." (Acts xxiv. 14.)

(3) It is evident from 2 Timothy iii. 16, 17 that he regarded all scripture as profitable. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." This broad declaration covers both Old and New Testament scriptures.

(4) His systematic method of raising money for the poor saints at Jerusalem was a practical application of the Old Testament law of proportionate giving. Compare 1

Corinthians xvi. 2 with Deuteronomy xvi. 17. His argument for the support of the Christian ministry is based on the Mosaic law and practice. "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." (1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. Cf. Deut. xviii. 1; Num. xviii. 20, 21.)

(5) He taught that the purpose of the gospel is to enable men to fulfill the requirement of the law, not to evade it or fall short of it. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 3, 4.)

No law of the Creator has been so hackled alike by its enemies and its friends as this law of the holy tithe. Selfishness and popular impulse seek after a religion that is cheap, and have itching ears for a stewardship doctrine or teaching that affords them pro-

tection. On the other hand, extreme legalism has sought to enforce the tithe by civil statute, thus corrupting its influence upon the giver. This was the tragic blunder of the Roman Catholic Church. We must remember that the law of the tithe is moral and spiritual and that its coercion, therefore, is the coercion of honor. But because Rome abused the tithe so fearfully in the Middle Ages is no adequate reason for Protestantism, in breaking away from the formalities and corrupt practices of the priestcraft of other centuries, to neglect her sacred duty today.

"It is time," says Albert F. McGarrah, "we put as much emphasis on our obligations as Christians as we do on the promises and hopes that depend thereon. It is time we recognize that God has rights as well as responsibilities; that we search out and fulfill our duties to the Almighty as well as ask favors of him."

The law of the tithe, as we have seen, is recognized in the first and last books of the Old Testament; it is reiterated and enforced in the pages between them; and it is fulfilled in the teachings of the New Testa-

ment. The great principles of righteousness defined in the moral laws which God has given for the good of humanity never change. It was a sin to kill when Cain slew Abel, and it is a sin to commit murder to-day. It was a sin to covet when Achan took the two hundred shekels of silver and the wedge of gold, and it is a sin to steal or be covetous to-day. It was a sin to profane the Sabbath in Nehemiah's day, and it is a sin to-day. It was robbery to withhold the tithes in olden times, and it is robbery to-day. In the light of the early history of mankind and the practice of heathen races, with Abraham's example and Jacob's vow before us, in view of the law of the tithe in the Mosaic code and its enforcement by the prophets in succeeding generations, the command of Malachi, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse," and the Saviour's "O-U-G-H-T," supplemented by the implications in the teachings of Paul, how can any one fail to feel the force of the obligation to tithe?

CHAPTER II

THE EFFICIENCY ROAD; OR, THE SUMMONS OF AN EMPTY CHURCH TREASURY

If the legal route to tithing stewardship is uninviting and objectionable, if it seems too hard and rugged a path, if its rigidity and severity repel, let us not overlook the fact that there are other ways to get there. We may join the procession of pilgrims who arrive over the efficiency road. Who are these pilgrims? They are a choice body of souls who love the Church, who feel its financial needs keenly, and who in their search for a way out discover that the tithing system is the most efficient and satisfactory method of financing the kingdom that has ever been devised, and consequently they adopt it. They respond to the challenge of church efficiency. They are moved by Jehovah's plea, "that there may be meat in mine house." They hear the summons of the empty Church treasury

A Practical Question

This leads us to inquire: "Has the Great Head and Founder of the Church revealed

any definite plan for the support of his Church?" This is a practical question that every Christian should consider when he assumes the responsibilities of Church membership.

A Practical Answer

The very place and purpose of the Church in the world point to an *affirmative* answer. It is the central and outstanding institution of history, the biggest and most potential organization in the universe. It outranks kingdoms and empires and suns and systems. Its mission is for all time and its design to reach every human being. It is the divinely established agency for man's redemption. It is the blood-washed army of the Almighty sent out for the conquest of the world. "In view of all this, is it possible that he has made no provision for its maintenance and enlargement? Is he indifferent as to how his Church is to be supported? Has he turned it over to the impulse or caprice, or blundering selfishness of narrow and perverted minds? Who believes it? The very statement sets at naught all the suggestions of practical business judgment and experience." Surely the King's business is *business*.

"It is unthinkable that the Great Head of the Church should project it without a working plan for its support. Every lodge or club or society in the land in its outstart first of all makes provision for its maintenance and perpetuity. This condition is considered indispensable. Is the Church of God the only institution in existence to ignore all business rules and trust to chance?"

God's Plan

If then God has a plan, what is that plan? The only financial system that God has ever given to his Church is the tithing system. The Jews by express command dedicated the first or sacred tenth to a special use, "even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation," which has its counterpart in the Church to-day. "Undeniably," said Bishop Joseph S. Key, "the law of tithe-paying was the inexorable law of the Jewish Church—a statute so plain as to be unmistakable, absolute in its obligation, and without exception in its application. One-tenth of all incomes was to be sacredly devoted to God as an act of religion. Moses, by divine direction, fixed this law for the Israelites, and who

dare say it is not intended for the Church universal? Why should it ever be changed? If it were ever practical and fair and efficient, what conditions can make it otherwise now? Has the great God changed? Has he changed his mind, his purpose, or his plan? He says: 'I am the Lord, I change not.' (Mal. iii. 6.) Why should he change? He sees the end from the beginning. Truth and justice and right are his attributes, and, like him, changeless. If, therefore, tithe-paying was ever right and law and best, it remains so, and ever will be."

No Substitute Given

If God did not mean for the tithing system to continue in the new dispensation, then he has left his earthly kingdom without any recognized financial foundation, for he has given no substitute in its place. One of the most vital principles of the Old Testament Church was the method of its material support. If this principle was to be set aside in the New Testament Church, would we not have had an intimation of so radical a change?

Christ was born into a nonmendicant religion—the only one in history. Is it not

unbelievable that he intended to found and substitute for the Jewish religion, whose ministers in holy things were as independent financially as their brethren of the other tribes, a religion that would depend not only for its propagation but even for its support upon the ability of its adherents, especially its ministers, to beg money? Is it conceivable that he left the support of his kingdom without suggestion, dependent upon the mere notion or whims of its citizens?

If the Jewish Church, which was provincial, needed a definite financial system, does not the Christian Church, in view of its world-wide program, need it more? The tithes of God's people should still find their way into his storehouse, and channel through his Church to the ends of the earth in blessing.

The Only Change

The Old Testament tithe belonged to the priests and their successors, and it was used for the sustenance of themselves and their families and the upkeep of the temple worship, but the New Testament tithe belongs

to Christ, who has no successor, having been "made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." (Heb. vii. 23, 24.) The New Testament tithe is the tithe of this unchangeable priest; it is holy unto him. It is for the support of his Church at home and abroad. Out of it the ministry is to be supported, churches built, missionaries sent to every land, schools for the training of Christian leaders maintained, human distress and suffering relieved, and, in fact, every enterprise of the kingdom of Christ among men carried forward.

The Inadequacy of Human Plans

The vast majority of Churches have the same complaint about the neglect members show toward current expenses, benevolences, improvements, and the other items of their budget. Is any one, preacher or layman, satisfied with the present status of things? Is there any fair hope or prospect of a change for the better under the present methods?

Can you think of any human device that has not been tried? "Plans patent and plans experimental; plans *ad infinitum* and plans *ad nauseum;* schemes which belittle the Church in the eyes of the world, and send it out a whining mendicant dishonored and ridiculed —have they not all either failed or had such limited success as to be the reproach and shame of Christendom?

"No open system of voluntary payments," said Bishop Key, "can be relied on for the support of the Church. It never has and never will. The Church can no more be supported by volunteer gifts than the State. What a ridiculous and pitiable spectacle would be presented if all laws for the collection of taxes were abolished, and tax collectors sent out to harangue the people on patriotism, and State pride, and then pass the hat for a freewill offering! How long would that system last, and what a laughingstock would the State become? It is the simple truth to say that no Church depends on the unsolicited, voluntary contributions of its members. And no one knows this more surely than the officials in charge of this branch of Church work. The problem

of stewards and deacons is how to raise sufficient money to carry the Church through the year. Public appeals are made, circulars sent out, committees and patent plans invented, and all possible pressure brought to bear short of expulsion. None know this better than the officials."

Satan's Strategy

Satan realizes that money is an indispensable asset to the Church. He knows that Christ's work will be delayed and his program for world redemption indefinitely postponed, if he can prevent the Church from getting the money with which to properly equip and support those who shall preach and teach and heal and serve in extending the gospel. He seeks, therefore, to safeguard his own cause by the continued and persistent intrenchment of covetousness in the Church. He is aware that the average disciple is very susceptible to temptation in matters pertaining to money. He is constantly striving to induce many professing Christians to rob God, to neglect their needy world neighbors, to insult Christ with beggarly pittances, and even to sell their souls,

like Judas, for a few paltry dollars. With all the power at his command he is opposing the adoption of a sane and scriptural financial policy by the Church, and at the same time endeavors to impede her evangelistic efforts by denouncing her cries for money. Is it not time for the Church to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan"?

Some Searching Reflections

Think of the glorious Bride of Christ having to beg! Is not this enough to awaken the disgust of the unbeliever? Should it not drive the believer to serious reflection? Has God no rights? Is he who is the owner of all the wealth of the universe a beggar that he should receive alms and donations? Should not men transfer him from the pauper class to the partner class and from their charity lists to their pay rolls? As the Great Proprietor is he not entitled to receive a per cent of our income as his right, and to designate the percentage we should pay?

The Adequacy of the Divine Plan

Should not all Christians be interested in a principle of finance that offers a solution

to all the money problems of the Church? Such a principle is the tithe. It is the divinely devised principle. The tithing way is the only way to secure adequate and dignified financial support for the work of the Church and the kingdom of God. "The coffers of the Church," said Bishop Bashford, "are largely empty, because we have demanded of every Christian at least one-seventh of his time, but have not demanded at least one-tenth of his money." Beyond all question universal stewardship made practical by tithing would furnish the sinews of war for the carrying out of Christ's program; it would redeem the Church from its age-long attitude of mendicancy and from unholy, semidegrading, and obnoxious financial methods; it would bring joy to the ministry and the membership of the Church; it would make of every local body a beacon light in the community and in the world; it would put the Church where she belongs in the life of the world and bring honor to our Lord; it would, as Dr. Robert E. Speer says, "pour into all the treasuries of the agencies of the Church and the great philanthropies and movements of charity and good will all that

they would need for the work that must be done"; in brief, it would meet the need of our time for the spread of the gospel throughout the whole world in so far as money can meet the needs of mankind.

Tithing Demonstrated

It has been demonstrated time and again that tithing will turn defeat into victory in Church finance.

A Down-Town City Church

The pioneer Church of American Protestantism to test the value of the tithing system was Wesley Chapel, a down-town Methodist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1896 the financial condition of this Church was so discouraging that the pastor recommended that it be abandoned. The official board had just about concluded to follow his advice, when seventy persons, rather than give up without making one more effort, signed a covenant to pay a tenth. The result was a shock of surprise to themselves, for all bills throughout the year were promptly paid. When the good news was reported to the congregation, there was a time of

great rejoicing. The membership of this Church speedily increased from 350 to 650, and the Sunday school attendance from 250 to 540. The prayer-meeting attendance quadrupled. The doors of the church were opened every night in the week. Dissensions ceased, and brotherly love came to prevail. In evangelism this Church rose to the place of leadership in the Conference, and it paid as much for missions in one year as ten other down-town Churches combined.

A Church in a Parish of Workingmen

The situation in the Methodist Episcopal Church at Geneva, N. Y., on October 1, 1915, was desperate. The budget for current expenses and benevolences was $7,500, the interest on the Church debt $4,500, and there was a $700 deficit on running expenses accumulated from years back, making a total of $12,700 to be raised during the year. Moreover, it was a parish of workingmen, with not a single person of means. The discouragements grew when the results of the every-member canvass became known. A few more than four hundred subscribers had pledged about $94 per week as against $245

per week needed to cover the entire budget. Under the leadership of the pastor, Rev. Ralph S. Cushman, a stewardship campaign was inaugurated, and in response to his call, on December 12, one hundred and twenty-five persons came forward, covenanting to bring into the Lord's treasury from week to week one-tenth of all their income in acknowledgment of their dependence upon God. In a second campaign in May this number increased to two hundred and sixty-five. What was the outcome? During the Conference year ending October 1, 1916, this Church raised not only the $12,700, but actually paid a total of $15,600 for all purposes, including the full payment of all apportionments to the benevolences plus twenty-five per cent. The attention of outsiders was attracted and a movement launched to raise $20,000 from without to apply on the Church debt, following the receipt of a letter, dated October 16, 1916, from a Presbyterian who had become interested and proposed to contribute $1,000 toward such a fund. A new spirit was created in the Church and a self-denial campaign was started the next year to secure $15,000 in addition to the tithe

to reduce the indebtedness on the building. Beyond question it was the stewardship and tithing revival that saved the day for the Geneva Church.

A North Carolina Town

As a result of a vigorous stewardship campaign in the Church at Gastonia, N. C., the majority of the members signed a pledge to tithe. A perceptible deepening of the spiritual life of the Church—almost a continuous revival—followed immediately. All current expenses were promptly met; the Centenary subscriptions were paid; a $10,000 parsonage for the pastor was erected; a $100,000 addition to the church was projected; and four churches for cotton mill communities in the town were built.

A Suburban Mission

West End Church in the city of Houston, Tex., was a small mission charge for more than twenty years. In October, 1918, this congregation faced financial failure. They were behind both on pastor's salary and the missionary and benevolent claims. A stewardship and tithing campaign was put on,

and the Church was placed on a tithing basis, at first partial but later on practically complete. Through the inspiration of this campaign all the obligations for that year were paid in full. The pastor's salary for 1919 was raised from $1,000 to $1,500 and paid monthly. The Conference collections were also advanced, but paid in full. The Centenary quota was oversubscribed, and in the face of it all a building enterprise was inaugurated. The spring of 1920 found this heroic people worshiping in their new house valued conservatively at $15,000. This was a modern miracle wrought by tithing.

A Two-Point Circuit

A certain charge in the Central West was living at a poor, dying rate. It was composed of two appointments, one in a fairly prosperous farming community and the other in the sand. The former was paying $760 and the latter $240 for the support of the ministry. The people were disheartened and wanted to give up their work. But one farmer who had insight and energy ordered a dozen copies of "A Man and His Money" and all the free

literature that the Stewardship Department of his Church would furnish. He sold the books to those who would buy, and loaned the remainder to those who would borrow. The literature he gave away to those who would take it. He began to talk and to practice tithing. Twenty families followed his example, and everything began to improve. At the end of the year the first point was paying $1,250 for ministerial support, all bills were paid, and they had $3,000 in the treasury for repairs on the church. The second point was paying $1,000 to the pastor and enjoying the greatest prosperity in its history.

What has been done in these and hundreds of other Churches can be duplicated *in any Church that will actually put tithing to the test.*

Startling Statistics

The wealth of the United States is twice that of the British Empire, which stands second on the list. Our total national physical assets, according to statistics compiled in 1920, aggregate $272,000,000,000. There were 26,500,000 families, and the average wealth per family was $10,300. The na-

tional income was $65,500,000,000, and the *per capita* income $586.

There are 25,000,000 Protestant communicants in America to-day. Much of the nation's wealth is in their possession. A large share of its income is pouring into their pockets annually. If the statement that Christian people as a class are more thrifty than others is true, then considerably more than the average share of wealth and income is being administered by members of the Church. Figuring, however, on the basis of the average *per capita* income of $586, these 25,000,000 Protestants would have a total income of $14,650,000,000. The rich, the near-rich, and the highly prosperous classes, of which American Protestantism beyond any doubt has her share, cannot discharge their stewardship obligation by merely giving one-tenth of their income. Taking into account the larger duty of these classes, one-seventh of the income of Protestant Christians would be a more righteous proportion and a more accurate estimate of their average stewardship responsibility. But even on the basis of ten per cent as the minimum, the Lord's share would be $1,465,000,000. The

total Protestant gifts for 1922 are estimated at $445,626,545 as a maximum. This is $1,019,373,455 short of the tithe. The *per capita* giving for all purposes was $17.82, whereas it would have been $58.60 if all gave as much as ten per cent.

According to the same method of calculation, the income of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1923 was $1,451,473,078. The actual gifts totaled $39,100,649, leaving $106,046,658 short of the minimum ten per cent. The total contribution per member for all causes was $15.85. The unpaid tithe of Southern Methodism for one year would take care of the remainder of the pledges to the Centenary and Christian Education Movements, provide the $10,000,000 for the Superannuate Endowment Fund, and leave nearly $60,000,000 to be appropriated.

America's luxury bill, as estimated by the Secretary of the Treasury in 1919, including such items as joy riding, pleasure resorts, races, luxurious services, excessively high-priced wearing apparel, carpets and rugs, cigars, cigarettes, tobacco, snuff, perfumery, face powder, cosmetics, soft drinks, candy,

chewing gum, and jewelry is $12,260,000,000. This is about twenty per cent of the national income. The cost of American schools is $1,000,000,000 a year. This means one dollar for education as against twelve for luxury. The sum of $715,170,000 was spent for picture shows and theaters from August, 1922, to August, 1923, which was $269,543,455 more than the Protestant Christians of America paid in that time for all religious purposes. One woman in this twentieth century spent $600,000 just for a string of beads to hang around her neck—enough money to keep sixty missionaries on the foreign field for ten years. When our bill for luxury is twelve times higher than our bill for education and at least twenty times higher than our bill for religion, surely it is time for America to call a halt, and for her Christian forces to awaken to a new sense of their stewardship.

A Timely Exhortation

When we review the failures of human devices and catch a vision of the wonderful success of the divine method, we are in a position to appreciate the timeliness and wis-

dom of the lofty hortatory call of Albert F. McGarrah:

Let us stop insulting God by begging for his Church and his work. Let us claim his financial rights instead of asking alms for him. Let us transfer him from the pauper class to the property-owner class; from the category of donation-seekers to his proper place as sole Proprietor of the world's wealth.

Let us cease to act as though our Creator-Father had died or moved out of the universe, or in any way forfeited his ownership. Let us repent of our former condescending habit of treating him as if he were a tramp asking for our leavings.

Let us couple our emotional love for Christ with real reverence for his rights in things material. Let us supplement our professions of faith in his claims as Saviour and Lord by appropriate financial practices.

Let us summon all men to recognize his right to instruct us in the proper use of every dollar which he permits to come into our possession, and to set apart and wisely invest for him and for the accomplishment of his purposes worthy shares of all our incomes in which he is Partner.

The Measureless Possibilities of Money

What vast and measureless possibilities for good are contained in money! What marvelous things it can accomplish if given a chance! A dime a day will feed a starving child in Europe or Asia. A nickel a week for

a year will furnish several Bibles for native Christians on mission fields. Fifty cents a week will educate a native nurse or doctor or minister in India. A dollar a week will support a Bible woman for a year, or a native preacher for six months, in China. Think how much good your dime, or quarter, or dollar, or ten dollars a week will do in helping to start or equip or support a Sunday school, hospital, orphanage, kindergarten, college, church, or other institution for doing good. Through money we can promote moral reform, provide for aged ministers, build needed churches on frontiers, establish and maintain Christian schools, and transport blessings around the world. Money has no feet, but you can telegraph its power in a night to the ends of the earth. It has no hands, but it can replace disease, ignorance, superstition, poverty, and unbelief with health, education, happiness, prosperity, and faith.

As Edison stood one day on the deck of an ocean liner and gazed out over the rolling billows, he exclaimed: "It makes me perfectly wild to see all this power going to waste." No corporation or trust company

has such a stupendous income as the combined tithe of God's people. O that this income, instead of being selfishly and sinfully wasted, might find its way into the storehouse of the Lord, to be invested in rebuilding the world and bringing in the kingdom of God!

CHAPTER III

THE PROSPERITY PATH; OR, THE LURE OF FINANCIAL SUCCESS

ANOTHER route to tithing stewardship is the prosperity path. Quite a few people, in coming to adopt tithing as a rule of life, traverse this path. They take up the practice because they believe it pays. They are fully persuaded that those who honor God in this way will profit financially by so doing. They claim that the tithe is the source of temporal as well as spiritual good. Acting in this faith, they expect and receive their reward.

Should we tithe for the sake of reward? Does not this view of tithing rob it of its altruism and make it a matter of sordid investment? Is it not wrong to bargain with God for gain? Does the Bible throw any light on such questions as these? Let us see.

THE CASE OF JACOB

Jacob, the earliest recorded vower of tithes, is the pioneer who blazed the prosper-

ity path to tithing. He celebrated his experience at Bethel by setting up a memorial stone and making a contract with God to pay him the tenth in return for the preservation and comforts of life. "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace: then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." (Gen. xxviii. 20-22.) We know that God took special cognizance of this contract, for many years afterwards when he appeared to Jacob in a vision he said: "I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst the pillar, *and where thou vowedst a vow unto me:* now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." (Gen. xxxi. 13.) Jacob kept faith with God, and God kept faith with Jacob and blessed him abundantly. "And the man [Jacob] increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses." (Gen. xxx. 43.)

Striking Scriptural Challenges

A researchful study of the Holy Scriptures reveals that of all the challenges for securing overflowing blessings, none are so striking and unqualified as those that make obedience to God in the use of money the condition of favor:

"Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." (Ps. xxxvii. 3.)

"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." (Prov. iii. 9, 10.)

"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." (Prov. xi. 24, 25.)

"If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in

drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." (Isa. lviii. 10, 11.)

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal. iii. 10, 11.)

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [the temporal necessities of life] shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi. 33.)

"Give, and it shall be given you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." (Luke vi. 38.)

"He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bounti-

fully shall reap also bountifully." (2 Cor. ix. 6.)

Who Shall Teach the Almighty?

Shall mere man undertake to give lessons in motives to the Almighty? Does not God mean exactly what he says in the promise, "Them that honor me I will honor"? (1 Sam. ii. 30.)

"Is it not wrong to appeal to my love of gain in this matter?" In response to numerous inquiries of this nature a noted American tither, speaking as a layman, replies: "Do you not pray for God's blessings on your temporal affairs? Do you mean what you say when you do? Do you not daily ask for the promised wisdom that you may be guided by it in all your duties? Do you keep your business, or daily labor, or your profession separate from your religion? Don't you work for gain? Gain, that you may care for those you love and those who are dependent upon you? Gain, that you may train and educate them in the best manner possible? Gain, that you may give them every advantage within your power? Gain, that you may do much more than this: that you

may have to give and do for others; that you may the more liberally aid and support those who give themselves to charitable, benevolent, and Christian work; that you may give more for the spread of Christ's kingdom in the earth? Is it wrong to pray for temporal prosperity with these objects in view?" Is it wrong for those who pray "Give us this day our daily bread" to tithe in order that they may be fed and amply provided with all the temporal necessities of life? "But isn't tithing for prosperity bribing God?" some one asks. No; he has fixed the conditions of blessing both temporal and spiritual, and when these conditions are met his will is not changed but carried out.

"The extension of the kingdom of God," says Bert Wilson, "depends upon the making of money. That is why God is in the money-making business with men. He expects them to use their money-making talents not simply for themselves, but for his glory. This brings upon the farmer, the manufacturer, the banker, and the laborer a new motive for money-making, a nobility and idealism of purpose which dignifies and sanctifies every business transaction."

The rewards of religion are not alone in spiritual satisfactions, but in the long run for the average man in temporal and material returns as well. "*Godliness*," declared St. Paul, "*is profitable for all things*, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. iv. 8.)

Self-Interest versus Selfishness

We must distinguish between self-interest and selfishness. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*." There is a place in the Christian religion for self-love, or self-interest, but not for selfishness. Self-love may prompt us to seek our own good or advantage for the larger social good, but selfishness is concerned exclusively with its own interest or happiness. Jesus spoke often of rewards, but not a word of approbation for selfishness ever escaped his lips. It is not the motive of selfishness, but the motive of high self-interest that he sanctions. He made it plain that the way to secure the highest and best for oneself is to pursue a policy of well-being for others. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life

for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." (Mark viii. 35.)

There is a direct relation between the welfare of the world and that of every person in it. Poverty, sickness, ignorance, crime, and war are a drain upon the wealth of the world, and of course of every individual in it. A man profits by living a life of stewardship because by so doing he invests his due proportion in the forces that are battling most successfully against ignorance, indigence, crime, sickness, and war.

The Gospel and Prosperity

It is an incontrovertible fact that material prosperity has followed in the wake of Christianity. The gospel of Christ is an antidote to poverty. It has raised the market value of a man. In pagan lands man power is cheapest. It is in Christian countries that human life is counted most valuable, and commands most in the industrial markets. In India a girl has been sold for the equivalent of a dollar. In America a boy of fifteen is valued commercially at $5,000; a full-grown man at from $15,000 to $20,000.

Poverty is a calamity that came with sin. Sin is destructive of all values, economic, moral, physical, and spiritual; while righteousness increases all values. It is a significant fact that God brought the Hebrews into a land where they would not suffer economic want. Is not a sufficient supply of food and other essentials a part of his program for all peoples of all nations? Surely he would have wealth increase until ample provision is made for all proper human wants.

Christianity tends always to turn misery into prosperity, and to make prosperity a means of saving the social order. The average heathen convert is economically better off after paying a tenth than before accepting Christ. "I believe," said Gladstone, "that the diffusion of the principle and practice of systematic beneficence will prove the moral specific of our age."

Are Tithers Happy and Prosperous?

The Bible indicates unmistakably a divine sanction upon the practice of tithing. This sanction is confirmed by Christian experience. The testimonies of thousands of tithers might be cited as evidence. In 1870

Mr. Thomas Kane, a layman of Chicago, began to pay a tenth of his income to charitable and religious objects. In a year or two he noticed a decided change in his business success, and declares that he could not help but observe a very marked connection between his tithing and his business prosperity. In 1875 he commenced making personal inquiries regarding the comparative temporal prosperity of others who tithed, and the response was so uniform that he published a tract on the subject under the pseudonym of "Layman." Since that time he has sent out thousands of circulars and tracts to ministers and laymen, and in answer to the question, "Have you ever known or heard of any one who was less generous, less happy, or less prosperous financially from being a tither?" he has received thousands of replies in the negative, with practically no exception. We give below a few *typical* testimonies sent in by the pastor of a Church of four hundred members, one hundred of whom were tithers:

"The truth of the teaching about tithing came to me like a second conversion, and I am happy in its observance."

"I have strictly observed the practice of tithing for twenty-four years, and would not give it up under any consideration."

"Soon after beginning to tithe my wages were increased more than the amount of my tithe."

"We find great peace in our home because we have begun to obey God in this particular. Our health has been better, we have had constant employment, and we are encouraged to mind the Lord in all his commandments."

"Being systematic in bookkeeping with the Lord has made us more careful and thrifty in all our business."

"I saw God's command in Malachi iii. 10. I accepted his challenge. He has opened the windows of heaven in abundant blessing."

When the Hon. Chester Ward Kingsley, a noted banker and philanthropist of Boston, was a young man, he was inspired by a sentence from his pastor to open a benevolent account. He used to pray: "Lord, give me a hand to get and a heart to give." His convictions were expressed in the following written statement: "Why should not a Christian business man open an account with

the Lord and treat it with all the sanctity and promptness that he would his account with a business firm? Resolved to do it." He was so prospered in business that before he died he gave away half a million dollars.

Can We Afford to Tithe?

The principal objection to tithing offered by the nontither is, "I can't afford it." This excuse outnumbers all others by far and is back of many other objections that are given. Is it really true? Who are qualified to witness in this case? Only those who put tithing to the test. What is their testimony? They express surprise at the increased amount they are able to give to the Lord, and at the increased temporal and spiritual prosperity the Lord gives to them. Instead of asking, "Can I afford to tithe?" it is more in keeping with the truth to inquire, "Can I afford not to tithe?"

The record does not show that the Jewish nation was ever prosperous when the people failed to tithe. It does show that they were prosperous when they paid their tithes. Does not this indicate a cause and effect relation between tithing and prosperity? The

Jews were tithers and are yet. Are they not financially prosperous? Do you ever hear of their begging money to support their churches or charities as we do? "The tithe," says Mr. Kane, "is a money or property law. It is only natural and consistent that the reward for obeying it should be financial. We who pay the tithe are the chief beneficiaries."

Can't afford to tithe? Who gives you health and sustains you while you toil? Whence came your ability to earn and to accumulate property? What God said to the children of Israel when they were about to enter Canaan he says to you to-day: "Remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth." (Deut. viii. 18.) He wards off paralyzing disease. He maintains the mind in balance. Were he to touch the sinew of your strength, instantly you would become helpless. Can you afford to make your prayers unanswerable? Covetousness makes the skies seem brazen, and the millstone of robbery sinks prayer to the depths of the sea of oblivion.

Business man, are you heavy of heart on account of failures behind you and threatened failures before you? Have you taken

God into partnership with you in your business? If not, have you considered that this may be the chief cause of your financial and spiritual bankruptcy? You have had your way and failed: now try God's way.

A Word of Caution

Are there any exceptions to the rule that tithers prosper? Practically every case of failure can be traced to causes which have nothing to do with tithing. We must not overlook the fact, therefore, that tithing in its financial results is bound by certain limitations. It does not affect conditions and circumstances with which it has no connection. It will not make poor land rich. It will not do for the tither what God expects him to do for himself. It is not a lazy man's substitute for crop cultivation, nor does it take the place of fertilization or irrigation. It will not make a successful merchant out of an untrained farmer. It is not a safeguard for the speculator. It will not take the place of special training in any calling. It is not a substitute for muscle, brains, or tact.

Tithing Ordained for Benefit of Tither

There are three members in the Tithing Stewardship Firm—God, the individual, and society. God has his rights, the individual his possessions, and society its claims.

God did not institute the law of the tithe for his own benefit. The silver and the gold are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. The world is his, and they that dwell therein. He does not need tithes for himself. He can take away all ten-tenths of man's possessions, if he pleases.

The principle of tithe-giving is needed by man as an individual unit of which society is the whole. It was not primarily for the benefit of those to whom he gives, but for the benefit of the tither himself that this principle was ordained. We need to give the tithe for our own good. Its purpose is not chiefly to raise money, but to build character. Other methods of meeting the needs of the social order might have been or might be devised, but they would not, like stewardship, have the desired effect in building character. The law of the tithe was instituted for man's benefit just as certainly as

the law of the Sabbath. The tithe was made for man, and not man for the tithe. God is much more interested in the making of men than he is in the making of money, and the adoption of sound principles of stewardship is vital to Christian character.

No wonder the great Gladstone considered it worth while to write to his son, who was pursuing studies in Oxford, on this important matter. "In regard to money," said he, "there is great advantage in its methodical use. Especially is it wise to dedicate a portion of our means to charity and religion, and this is more easily begun in youth than in after life. It is desirable that the tenth of our means be dedicated to God, and it tends to bring a blessing on the rest. No one can tell the richness of the blessings that come to those who thus honor the Lord with their substance."

When Harvey S. McLeod, of Troy, N. Y., became a Christian he went to his pastor and asked how he could make the most of himself. His pastor advised him to begin as a tither, which he did. Purchasing a small ledger, he wrote out a pledge and began keeping a strict account, and kept this up

for more than forty years. He helped twenty-five young men get an education, and started three hundred and thirty-two others on the highway of tithing.

The Tither's Reward

What, then, are the benefits of tithing? It pays in temporal prosperity and in spiritual blessings. It is a safeguard against covetousness in the life of the average man. It brings the peace of mind that comes from having a question of duty settled, and makes us happier. It helps to build a strong, dependable Christian character. It makes us more useful to ourselves and others, and enables us to bring our religion into practical use every working hour of our lives. To quote again from the Chicago layman: "Summing up the whole subject in a single sentence, the only possible method by which we laymen can bring our religion into practical use to ourselves and others every working hour of our daily lives is by pledging and paying a certain definite proportion of our income to the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the earth. If we do this, and that proportion is the God-ordered

measure of one-tenth, no matter whether we are thinking about it or not, we know that one-tenth of every working day, one-tenth of every working hour, yes, six seconds of every minute is devoted to the Master's use just as acceptably as if we were in church singing his praises and joining in his worship."

"It is the universal experience," says Bishop Edwin H. Hughes, "that the person who begins to tithe grows in vision and grace. The adoption of the one-tenth figure of income by the majority of our Church members, as the start and not the goal of systematic Christian giving, would again open the windows of heaven, and the old promise of blessing would be modernly fulfilled."

Dare to Trust God

The finest kind of daring is that which dares to trust God. He knows our needs and dares us to trust him. His Old Testament dare is Malachi iii. 10, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you

out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it"; and his New Testament dare is Matthew vi. 33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." These promises might well be written in golden letters above the door of every church in the world. To claim them is putting God first, and this itself is the highest kind of prosperity. They are plain, direct, straightforward messages to sincere and earnest souls. Our Heavenly Father is interested in the every-day life and prosperity of his children. He dares us to prove him with the tithe, and to trust him in temporal as well as spiritual things. Why should it be easier to trust God for our eternal salvation than for our material needs? We trust him to save us from sin; why should we be afraid to trust him in financial affairs?

The tithing stewardship covenant is a partnership covenant; and when we are in partnership with God, our finances are of as much moment to him as to us. While we have no warrant for supposing that he will bless the untithed dollar, we know that all the forces of the universe—winds, tides, sun-

shine, evaporation, warmth, cold, electricity, water, rain, everything—are pledged of him to bless and to help the dollar shared with him.

CHAPTER IV

THE GRACE HIGHWAY; OR, THE ENTREATY OF LOVE

By far the most inviting route to travel in becoming tithing stewards is the grace highway—for it is a broad, elevated way, with a smooth surface, no pitfalls, no bad bridges, no dangerous curves, and beautiful scenery on both sides. It is the gospel highway. Pilgrims who come this way are Christian indeed in the amount, spirit, and design of their giving. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and across their frontlets and upon their breasts is inscribed "*Holiness unto the Lord.*" They have responded to the entreaty of love.

The highway of grace is the blood-sprinkled way, the way of privilege and of power. There are thousands, however, who delight to claim its privileges, but decline to pay its tolls. When duty crosses with desire, they seek to justify a selfish course by repeating: "We are not under law, but under grace." They have a mistaken notion of

grace—for one of the manifestations of grace is liberality. "We made known to you the grace of God which hath been given to the churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." (2 Cor. viii. 1, 2.) Grace leads to the sacrifice of self for the sake of enriching the lives of others. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.)

The Higher Standard of Grace

The liberty of grace is all too frequently used as an excuse for lowering the standards of Christian living, when in reality the standard of liberty is higher than the standard of law; for without question the requirements of the law have been swallowed up in the larger and fuller obligations of grace. Christ set a higher standard than that of Moses. He pointed out that the Jewish laws on divorce, murder, and adultery did not go far enough. He demands that our righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees.

When we advance to the standard of Christ, the law is no longer necessary. Until then we need the law as a teacher. Have we advanced to Christ in stewardship? Do we pay the tenth and more for love's sake? The Christian is exhorted to abound in the grace of giving. "Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." (2 Cor. viii. 7.) How can we abound in this grace, and yet give to God a smaller proportion of our income than the law of Moses required? Nowhere in the Bible is a separated portion of less than a tenth suggested. If the tithe is not the minimum under grace, what percentage is? Two per cent? Five per cent? Seven per cent? Or eight per cent? If it is lawful for a disciple of Christ to spend more than nine-tenths of his income on himself, he has a right to be more selfish than the Jew, and Christianity has lowered a virtue.

The Superior Motives of the Gospel

Are the motives of the gospel inferior to those of Judaism and heathenism? Are the

coming of Christ, the sacrifice of Calvary, and the gift of the Holy Spirit deserving of a less financial return than the Hebrews paid in Old Testament days, and than they pay to-day for the maintenance of the hollow shell of Judaism, or than thousands of heathen expend in the futile worship of dumb, dead idols? "The love of Christ constraineth us" is a higher motive than "The law compels us," and Christianity preaches a freedom unknown to Judaism, or any heathen cult. It is a sad reflection that the liberality of the Jew or the heathen should *ever* exceed that of the Christian. The loftier motives of the gospel should impel us to go forward and not backward. Christian nations, because of the influence of the motives and ideals of the gospel, are more prosperous by far than heathen nations, and Christianity has brought its adherents a prosperity far greater than Judaism brought to its followers. If, therefore, any change from the tithe should be made, it should be to ask for more rather than less.

The thermometer of stewardship should certainly not rise higher under law than it does under grace. It is a severe indict-

ment of the Christian Church that it has fallen below even the Jewish low-water mark of a single tithe. The disciple who allows the Jew to outclass him in giving is a robber under the cloak of Christianity. Grace has not repealed the Ten Commandments, but provided strength and more compelling motives for keeping them. So it is with the commandment of the tithe. The law respecting the holiness of the tithe has been filled so full of grace and love and power that we should be impelled to attain a higher standard of giving than the world could have known before. In the light of New Testament teaching this law is the time-honored and divinely ordained method for the education of the race toward ideal stewardship. "If there is any difference," says John Ruskin, "between the Levitical and the Christian offering, it is that the latter may be just so much the wider in its range as it is typical in its meaning, as it is thankful instead of sacrificial."

The Old and the New Testaments are not antagonistic one to the other and are not to be divorced one from the other. They supplement and complement each other. God's

"Law" and God's "Grace" are not opposed. Even in a dispensation of grace we need the tithe to give point to stewardship and furnish it a framework on which to build. The new dispensation requires that we do as a matter of loyalty and love all that the old dispensation required as a matter of law *and more.*

Grace Does Not Change Ownership

God owns the world now just as much as he ever owned it. Grace has not, does not, and cannot affect his title to it. Now it is a requirement of both God and man that there must always be an honest recognition of property rights. The liberty of the New Testament cannot alter this fundamental truth. Disregard of property rights causes trouble among men, and it brings about variance between God and man. For God will not share his sovereignty with mammon, nor with any other idol that man may enthrone in his place. No matter how much property man may own in *fee simple,* he cannot own one foot of ground nor one dollar's worth of wealth *in fee eternal.* This is true, and grace cannot change it. The property rights of the Almighty, his divine sovereignty and owner-

ship, demand recognition and acknowledgment under grace just as truly as they did under law. *The tithe must ever abide then as a token of the unchanging truth that God is Sovereign Lord.*

First Examples of New Testament Stewardship

What effect did the gospel have on the lives of the first believers? Did it make them less or more liberal? The New Testament and contemporaneous history unmistakably indicate not a backward but a tremendous forward trend in stewardship both as to the spirit and the amount of giving. Grace prompted the publican, Zaccheus, to part with half of his goods to feed the poor, and to make fourfold restitution to them he had wronged. Grace moved Mary of Bethany to break the alabaster box of ointment, which was worth three hundred Roman pence, or the equivalent of a whole year's wages for a workingman. Grace constrained the poor widow to put all her living into the temple treasury. Grace stirred the Macedonian Christians to give to the limit of their power and beyond. Grace inspired the

property-holding disciples at Jerusalem to share their possessions in common with their brethren from afar. Grace led the Levite, Barnabas, to sell his land and turn over the price to the apostles. Grace made over Saul of Tarsus, the harsh and rigorous Pharisee, and sent him throughout the Gentile world preaching the gospel at his own expense.

For more than a century after Pentecost we find traces here and there of the practice of the community of goods. Justin Martyr (A.D. 110-165) said: "We who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and possessions now bring what we have into a common stock and communicate to every one in need." Irenæus (A.D. 120-202) wrote: "And for this reason they [the Jews] had indeed the tithes of their goods consecrated to him, but those who have received liberty set aside all their possessions for the Lord's purposes, bestowing joyfully and freely not the less valuable portions of their property, since they have the hope of better things."

With such facts as these before us can we suppose that the first disciples thought for a moment that the standard of stewardship

had been lowered? Yea, rather, in such an atmosphere of grace the inferior standards of Judaism were like the light of dawn in comparison with noon-day's full-orbed splendor.

The Testimony of the Early Church Fathers

What was the impression of the early Christian Fathers? They lived in the dispensation of grace. Did they understand that tithing was no longer binding upon the Church, that the disciples of the Master were free from this duty? Fortunately, enough of their writings touching this subject have been preserved to show us the consensus of opinion that prevailed among them.

Irenæus, in commenting on Christ's teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, says: "Now all these were not the injunctions of one doing away with the law, but of one fulfilling, extending, and widening it among us; just as if one should say that the more extensive operation of liberty implies that a more complete subjection and affection toward our liberator has been implanted within us."

Origen (A.D. 185-254) inquires, "How

then is our righteousness abounding more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, if they dare not taste the fruits of their land before they offer first fruits to the priests, and tithes are separated for the Levites, whilst I, doing none of these things, so misuse the fruits of the earth that the priests know nothing of them, the Levite is ignorant of them, the divine altar does not perceive them?"

An excerpt from "The Apostolic Constitutions," A.D. 300, referring to the manner in which the bishop was to administer the first fruits and tithes, reads: "Let him use those tenths and first fruits, which are given according to the command of God, as a man of God; as also let him dispense in a right manner the freewill offerings, which are brought in an account of the poor, to the orphans, the widows, the afflicted, and strangers in distress, as having that God for the examiner of his accounts, who has committed the disposition to him."

Ambrose of Milan (A.D. 340-397) asserts: "God has reserved the tenth part for himself, and therefore it is not lawful for a man to retain what God has reserved for himself."

Jerome (A.D. 345-420) explains and exhorts: "What we have said of tithes and first fruits which of old used to be given by the people to the priests and Levites, understand also in the case of the people of the Church. . . . At least let us imitate the rudimentary teachings of the Jews so as to give a part of the whole to the poor and pay the priests and Levites due honor. If any one shall not do this, he is convicted of defrauding and cheating God."

Augustine (A.D. 340-397) makes this charge: "He whose righteousness thou oughtest to exceed giveth a tenth: thou givest not one-thousandth. How wilt thou surpass him whom thou matchest not?"

Chrysostom (A.D. 347-407) averred: "They gave tithes, and tithes upon tithes for orphans, widows, and strangers; whereas some one was saying to me in astonishment at another, 'Why, such a one gives tithes.' What a load of disgrace does this expression imply, since what was not a matter of wonder with the Jews has come to be so in the case of the Christians? If there was danger then in omitting tithes, think how great it must be now."

Cassian, who died 432 A.D., declared: "If even those who, faithfully offering tithes of their fruits, are obedient to the more ancient precepts of the Lord cannot climb the heights of the gospel, you can see very clearly how far short of it those fall who do not even do this."

The following Councils of the early Church considered the question whether Christians are under obligation to pay tithes, and decided in the affirmative: Ancyra, A.D. 314; Gangra, A.D. 324; Orleans, A.D. 511; Tours, A.D. 567; Rouen, A.D. 650; Toledo, A.D. 663; Fimli, A.D. 791; and London, A.D. 1425. In speaking of this same question, Bingham, in his Christian Antiquities, says: "This is the unanimous judgment of the fathers and the voice of the Church uncontradicted for more than a thousand years."

The Priesthood Argument

John Calvin's argument in favor of the tithe still stands unanswered to-day. "A priesthood," he said, "has a perpetual right to the tithe." The priests paid tithes to the high priests. Believers are the priests of the

new dispensation: "And hath made us kings and priests unto God." (Rev. i. 6.) Christ is our great High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. vi. 20), and is entitled to receive the tithes of his people. Will the bride of this priestly Husband rob him and leave him empty-handed in the skies?

The Testimony of Modern Christian Leaders

The witness of the Church Fathers of preceding centuries is confirmed by the testimony of Christian leaders to-day. It is a significant fact that there is general unanimity of opinion among modern stewardship experts with reference to the duty of the disciples of Christ in the new dispensation to give as much or more than the Hebrews gave in the old dispensation.

J. Campbell White, President of Wooster College, Wooster, Ohio, and formerly with the Laymen's Missionary Movement, says: "The tenth is the starting point and the minimum proportion for all Christians to give systematically to God."

Albert F. McGarrah, of the New Era

Movement of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., declares: "Certainly the burden of proof is on any objector to prove that—in view of God's ownership, of Christ's missionary program, and of the New Testament doctrine of stewardship—he as a loyal Christian can consistently offer less than a tenth."

W. E. Doughty, in "The Call of the World," affirms: "The tenth and *beyond* is the Bible rule. The Old Testament emphasis is on the *tithe*, the New Testament emphasis is on the *beyond*."

David McConaughy, in "Money the Acid Test," records what he regards as the principles which appear in God's plan of developing the grace of giving in the hearts of his children. He gives as the fourth principle: "That the love of Christ constrains the true Christian to adopt a standard of giving higher than that of pagan or patriarch or Hebrew under the law."

Ralph S. Cushman, the Executive Secretary of the Stewardship Movement of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Centenary campaign, makes this statement and inquiry: "Under the gospel, men ought to do as much and more than the Jews did

under the law, else how can Christians 'abound' in the grace of giving?"

Harvey Reeves Calkins, the author of "A Man and His Money," writes: "When the modern worshiper remembers that, in all the world, no prophet, whether pagan, Jew, or Christian, has yet arisen to name a different ratio, but a tenth has been observed through all the centuries, he will not believe that some other proportion is wiser than that. He will observe it with honor and intelligence."

Bert Wilson, of the Promotion Division, United Christian Missionary Society, asserts: "Jesus has taken off all restrictions and has given his disciples the great task of evangelizing the world. With this tremendous task before them and with unprecedented wealth in their possession, Christian men and women who understand the spirit of Christ will recognize that the tithing principle was revised upward. Jesus never revised anything downward. Everything he touched was enlarged and spiritualized."

The World Program of Christ

"Has tithing passed away? Yes. It passed away like a river becomes a sea.

Signs and emblems passed away with Christ, but every moral principle Christ extended and pressed much farther than Moses's law ever did. And if there is any moral principle on earth, it is the support of the kingdom of God, upon which depends the triumph or failure of that kingdom." The program of Christ involves all the world, all time, all truth, and all people. It demands greatly increased rather than diminished giving. We need to reconstruct our ideas of liberality. Can we truthfully say that a man who doesn't tithe is liberal? The world is sick. Its malady is sin. The only remedy is the gospel. Two-thirds of the people of the world are without this remedy, and one-third of them have not so much as heard the Great Physician's name. Money is needed to meet the emergency. In view of this situation should not a sinner saved by grace contribute more than the ancient Jew who had no world to evangelize?

The Highest Value of the Tithe

The tithe is the fulfillment of a sacred duty. It is the satisfaction of depleted church treasuries. It is a channel of tem-

poral and material blessing. It is the minimum expression of practical Christian stewardship. It is all these and more. *It is the identification of a man with God.* A Western senator said: "It was not until I recognized God to be the actual owner of the property which I held that I understood the thrill of fellowship with God. When I paid my tithe, in acknowledgment of that ownership, it seemed as though every fiber of my being acknowledged him. I knew that God owned not only the property which I possessed, but myself as well. From that time to this, fellowship with God has been natural and easy." The systematic and prayerful practice of tithing is a perpetual reminder of the presence and companionship of the living God. It is an aid to personal fellowship and a means of spiritual partnership. The preaching of this truth will help to make God real in everyday life.

Summing Up

Considering the superior motives of the gospel, the higher stewardship teachings of the New Testament, the testimony of the early Church Fathers, the witness of modern

Christian leaders, and the world-wide program of Christ, should not the Church to-day receive in tithes and offerings for ministerial support, for missions, for Christian education, and the various benevolences more in proportion than was paid to the Levites of old merely for their own maintenance and that of the temple worship?

Let Controversy Cease

I have no quarrel with any one about the route he travels in reaching the destination of tithing stewardship, which is the beginning and not the end of Christian stewardship. The fact that he arrives is of far greater moment than the way he comes. Any one of the reasons suggested by the different routes mentioned—the requirement of law, the good of the kingdom, our highest personal good, or the obligations of grace—is sufficient ground to stand upon as against a haphazard method of giving. In view of the cumulative weight of the fourfold appeal—the appeal of law, the appeal of church efficiency, the appeal of temporal and spiritual prosperity, and the appeal of grace—it ought not to be a controverted point as to the

minimum amount a Christian should give for all kingdom purposes. With this point settled, we should no longer think of being Christians without being tithing stewards, and tithing should soon become the general fashion in the Church.

Have You Arrived?

At the tomb of Lafayette General Pershing said: "Lafayette, we are here." How eloquent with meaning were those words! We had said to our government: "Take our railroads, take our factories, take our money, our food, our sons, our very selves, if need be. All that we are and all that we have are yours to help win the war." And we had sent our army across the sea, with General Pershing as its appointed head. It was as the steward of the American people, and the custodian of the liberties of the world, that he spoke in grateful remembrance of the illustrious service of that gallant and daring French hero who fought so bravely for American independence.

As a steward of all the values that have been intrusted to your keeping, and before the open grave of our Risen and Living

Leader, who paid the price of your redemption with his own blood, will you not say in irrevocable decision, "Lord Jesus, I consecrate my all to thee and thy work, and from henceforth here is my tenth to show you that I mean it"?

CHAPTER V

THE CALL OF A COMPLETE GOSPEL

THE person who has arrived at the goal of tithing has obtained a vantage ground from which to behold more clearly and appreciate more fully the gospel of stewardship in its completeness and its power. Until this first goal is reached the time is not ripe for the exhortation to go on to perfection in the practice of Christian stewardship. The divine method of developing a race of Christian stewards has been to start with the separated portion and work toward the consecrated whole, to begin with law and work toward love. When once we have attained to the minimum standard of scriptural giving, no matter by what route we have come, we should be impelled to hold the ground we have gained and advance as we are able by the higher motives of grace, manifested and strengthened by the considerations involved in a complete gospel and the special stewardship teachings of Pentecost. Likewise some wavering souls, not yet fully persuaded in their own minds, may be induced to quicken

their pace to the first goal by these latter considerations.

The gospel of the kingdom of God is the greatest news that heaven has conveyed to earth. It is the glad tidings of redemption. It proclaims the advent of a Saviour, the possibility of pardon for sin and freedom from sin, the hope of triumph over the world, and immortal happiness beyond the grave. It is the divine prescription for the salvation of humanity from its fallen, lost, and ruined estate. It is a whole gospel for the whole man, covering every aspect and phase of human relationship, and omitting nothing vital to human life, human need, and human character.

The Gospel of the Kingdom Embodies The Gospel of Stewardship

This gospel of the kingdom, therefore, being all-inclusive, embodies in its content the gospel of Christian stewardship. It would be incomplete without it. The doctrine of stewardship is as truly a part of the body of Christian truth as the doctrines of repentance, faith, and regeneration. It is a Bible doctrine as wholesome as holiness and as

sacred as sanctification. For like them it manifests itself in an out-shining life, and finds expression in fragrant, everyday living.

The Gospel of Stewardship Not Melancholy

"Steward" and "Stewardship" are scriptural terms. They came out of the vivid life of the Orient. There is color in them and the glow of living things. The steward was the personal representative of his master. He knew his master's mind and managed his affairs. Into his hands was committed the keeping of all his master's goods. His title was one of honor and his position one of sacred trust. In the light of these facts the gospel of stewardship is not a repugnant and repellant but an attractive and appealing gospel. It is not a melancholy gospel dispersing darkness and gloom. It is a joyous gospel of holy hilarity and Christmas glee. Its spirit is expressed in the motto: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The practice of stewardship fascinates and grips us more and more. In reality "stewardship" is not an offensive and odious word, but a word of dignity and glory, possessing

all the charm that divine revelation and Christian experience can give it. Those who have discerned the depth and height and length and breath of its meaning can see the halo of the Cross shining about its brow and the smile of Grace playing upon its face.

A Comprehensive Gospel

The quest of stewardship is primarily a quest for men. The supreme need of the kingdom is life, consecrated life that lays time, talent, material possessions, and everything upon God's altar. The call of stewardship embraces all that we are, all that we have, all that we do, and all that we acquire. Its voice cries out night and day, "God owns us; we are his—our souls, our hearts, our heads, our hands, our all." As between us and our fellow men, what we have belongs to us, and we have the right to defend our title to it. But as between God and us, it belongs to him, and his is an unassailable, indisputable, and abiding title. He is the sole, absolute, and rightful owner of all persons and things, and we have no record that he has ever given a quitclaim deed to any

man. What is your life—a vapor, a question, a stern reality? Yes, it is all these and a great deal more—*it is a stewardship.* A Whole Life, the only Perfect Life, has been given for us, and we should meet that matchless gift with nothing less than a full commitment of our whole lives to him. "Know ye not that ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price." (1 Cor. vi. 18, 19.)

> "I gave, I gave My life for thee;
> What hast thou given for Me?"

The Gospel of Stewardship Includes the Gospel of Money

Though it is much broader in its scope than material things, nevertheless the gospel of Christian stewardship comprehends material things; it takes in the gospel of money. It is something infinitely larger than church budgets and duplex envelopes; still it sustains a definite relation to both. It is bigger than the art of giving, but it includes that art. While our quest is for men rather than money, yet *we have not finished our work of winning men until we have led them to live as Christian stewards.*

A Test of Consecration

The consecration of property is a test of the consecration of personality. We cannot be sure that we mean business about Christ's big business until we put our possessions on the altar as a part and evidence of the full consecration of ourselves. An experienced evangelist declared: "I have come to the point where I utterly discredit any evangelism that leaves out stewardship." There are some people who seem to think that they can give themselves to God, and that such an act has no relation whatever to their property. Every disciple and prospective disciple should be instructed in his stewardship responsibility and brought to realize that no amount of work or pious professions can take the place of the honest cashing up of his faith. The chief curse of Christendom is that class of disciples who follow Christ until it begins to cost them something. Stewardship, especially the stewardship of money, gets every man's number. It classifies people on the basis of truth, merit, and character. It separates them into wise and foolish, big and little, righteous and wicked,

Christians and hypocrites. A Church member who was trying to persuade a neighbor to become a Christian met with this unexpected rebuff: "I don't believe a word you say, for to my certain knowledge you have not paid as much to the Church the past twenty years as your last Durham cow cost." "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven!"

A Test of Orthodoxy

Rejection of, or erroneous belief in regard to, some fundamental religious doctrine or truth is heresy. Stewardship is one of the fundamentals. When a man is sound on stewardship he is usually sound on the inspiration of the Scriptures, the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, and the other fundamentals. But he may be notably orthodox on all these and notoriously heterodox on stewardship. The most widespread and hurtful heresy in Protestant Christianity to-day is unorthodoxy in the stewardship creed and practice of the rank and file of her constit-

uents. God's supreme rival in the hearts of men is not pleasure; it is not skepticism; it is not rationalism; it is not infidelity; it is not atheism; it is mammon. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The last citadel in a man's life to be captured for God as a rule is money, and when that is taken he owns every part of it. There are vast multitudes who are in spiritual jeopardy on account of their attitude toward property. They are misappropriating trust funds. They are handling as their own that which belongs to Another. They need to be warned of their peril. The gospel of stewardship is their only hope. Away with the heresy that it is sacrilege to discuss church finances in the sanctuary and that the preacher who says the least about money is the most pious! There are 1,565 references to giving in the Bible. Under the spell of Pentecost Peter called down the judgment of God upon Ananias and Sapphira. Paul classed covetousness with murder and idolatry, and he declared that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Jesus had more to say about money than any other one thing. Sixteen of his thirty-eight parables, and one verse out of

every seven in the four Gospels, relate to man's attitude to property.

A Fatal Malady

In the New Testament cemetery of lost souls the love of money is the malady written on most of the tombstones. Some of the epitaphs authorized by Jesus are these: "Thou fool," "He went away sorrowing," "In hell he lifted up his eyes," and "The son of waste." The story of these lives is the story of what men pay for silver and gold. What do you pay for your money? Are you buying it with your religion? Are you purchasing it with the price of your soul? What would you be worth if you lost all your money?

The Gospel of Proportionate Giving

The gospel of money embraces the gospel of proportionate giving. All God's rules for giving are proportional rules. The Mosaic rule of the old dispensation inculcates the principle of proportionate giving: "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing which the Lord thy God hath given thee." (Deut. xvi. 17.) The Pauline rule

of the new dispensation does likewise: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." (1 Cor. xvi. 2.) The lax notion that the Church is God's institution, endowed with divine grace, and consequently can get along with no method, or with any sort of loose, haphazard, slipshod method of finance cannot stand in the light of the teachings of the Holy Scriptures.

If something needs to be done and God has a plan for doing it, we should adopt and follow his plan. Most disciples fall short in their giving because they fail to recognize that God has commanded a definite proportion of their income to be set aside for holy uses. Having no definite program, they drift into a shiftless way of giving that robs them and sadly weakens the Church. It is a poor type of stewardship indeed that pays to the kingdom of God what one can afford after all other claims have been met.

What would you think of maintaining the government or supporting the World War with pink teas, bazaars, oyster suppers, and freewill offerings spasmodically given? It is just as reasonable for thinking men to expect

that the program of winning the world for Christ can ever be carried out with any such business policy. Great drives for specific sums may be put through by extraordinary cultivation and pressure, but the Church will never come into her own until her members realize that the only true basis for financing the kingdom is that of proportionate giving. When that day comes the answer to the world's cry will no longer depend upon the caprice of man's changeable moods.

The Gospel of Tithing

The gospel of proportionate giving incorporates the gospel of tithing. It is not a debatable question as to whether a Christian should give or not give. No disciple can excuse himself from a personal financial relation to the bringing in of the kingdom of God. Neither is it a point of controversy as to whether a Christian should give in proportion to his ability. The scriptural giver, as we have observed, is the proportional giver. But the question arises, "What proportion?"

The Bible Rule

The tenth and beyond is the Bible rule. The emphasis of the Old Testament is on

the tenth. "And all the tithe is the Lord's." (Lev. xxvii. 30.) "The tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." (Lev. xxvii. 32.) "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse." (Mal. iii. 10.)

The emphasis of the New Testament is on the beyond. "For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26.) "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." (Matt. vi. 19.) "Whoso hath this world's goods, and beholdeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John iii. 17.) "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 33.)

History Corroborates Divine Revelation

The record of divine revelation that specifies the tithe as the minimum amount that should be set apart for the purposes of religion is corroborated by history. The Egyptians, Babylonians, Phœnicians, Ethiopians,

Grecians, and Romans devoted a tithe to their gods. This custom was followed by Roman dictators, lawyers, farmers, shepherds, merchants, sailors, miners, and cooks. Demosthenes, the Grecian orator, said: "It is sacrilege to retain the tenth." The early Church Fathers taught and practiced tithing. Eight great councils of the Church ordered all Christians to pay the tenth. Luther and Calvin urgently advocated it. John Wesley built upon the tithe as the beginning of stewardship, but both by precept and example set a far higher standard.

Should Everybody Tithe?

Is this gospel of proportionate giving with the tithe as the minimum a universal gospel? Let us see. There is one class of people to whom if it applies it will include everybody, and that is the very poor. Of course the rich and the near-rich should pay far more than the tenth; and if the very poor can afford to tithe, the man of moderate means should experience no difficulty in doing so.

In answer to the question, "Can a poor man tithe?" we wish to make five observations:

1. The covenant to tithe is not a promise to pay something you do not have. Jacob was a poor wanderer when he made his famous vow to tithe. When there is no income, there is no tenth due. The tithe is of the heart when the purse is empty, and it is both of the heart and purse when the purse is full.

2. There is not a case on record of any one who has ever been poorer for tithing. I have never seen any one, heard of any one, nor read of any one who was worse off financially for having paid a tenth of his income to the Lord. Have you?

3. The tithe is an appeal to faith. "Prove me now herewith," says the Old Testament; and "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," says the New. Does some one ask, "What shall I do in the days of pinch?" The answer is, "Trust God." Learn a lesson from the widow of Zarephath. In the days of famine when, at the command of Elijah, she had faith to make a little cake for the man of God first, behold she had plenty for herself, her son, and her house for many days.

4. This question is seldom raised by the poor themselves, but usually by covetous

people who are looking for a barrage to hide behind. As a matter of fact only the poor should tithe; this proportion is especially for them. Everybody else should pay more according as they prosper.

5. At bottom tithing has nothing to do either with poverty or with riches, but with the relation of man to God. It is the acknowledgment of God's ownership and man's stewardship. The principle of the separated portion proclaims and helps to establish the personal dominion of God in thought and life. In the hour of acknowledgment we are shut in with God alone, and in setting aside the separated portion we are thinking not primarily of missions, nor movements, nor budgets, but of him and our personal allegiance to him.

In view of these five facts we conclude that the poor man should tithe; and if he can tithe, every man should be a proportionate giver, starting with the tithe. Unto every man, be he poor or rich, who deliberately separates a righteous proportion of his living as an act of worship unto "the King eternal, immortal, invisible," there rings out the encouraging assurance of Paul: "My God

shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Summary

Let us sum up the four basic propositions we have discussed in presenting the stewardship call of a complete gospel:

1. The gospel of the kingdom of God, being all-inclusive, embodies in its content the gospel of Christian stewardship.
2. The gospel of Christian stewardship includes the gospel of money.
3. The gospel of money embraces the gospel of proportionate giving.
4. The gospel of proportionate giving incorporates the gospel of tithing.

Hearing the Call

The scientist Faraday declared: "There is not a law under which any part of this universe is governed that does not come into play in the phenomenon of the chemical history of the candle." Just so stewardship is connected with all the vital forces of Christ's kingdom, and its practice brings them into play and reaches into every phase of life with transforming influence. When

a man acknowledges God as his Creator and Owner, takes Christ as his Redeemer and Saviour, and accepts his responsibilities as a Christian steward, he is pitching his life on the highest possible plane. It is an epoch in any man's life when he reaches such a momentous decision.

It was the night of June 23, 1921. The war-torn city of Verdun was in gala dress. Exercises in commemoration of the fifth anniversary of the retaking of one of the great forts of the city were being held on the city square. Close to the orchestra on a large granite rock there sat an American soldier. As he gazed upon the battle-scarred veterans of the war and beheld their crosses of honor, and witnessed the tear-stained faces of mothers and widows dressed in black, and listened to the martial music, his very soul was stirred within him. He thought of how he had faltered, not on the field of battle, but in the face of temptation where it meant a long, hard fight to win, and he felt ashamed. But as the glorious words of that famous French war song, "They shall never pass, they shall never pass, never, never, never," rang out over and over again, his face be-

came fixed and his determination began to rise. The multitudes scattered at length to their homes, and the ruined city shone white in the moonlight. But the American soldier still sat on the fallen block of stone. He was humming over and over the words of the beautiful song, but in his heart he was saying: "They shall never pass. The things that make me less a man shall never pass the threshold of my life. I, too, shall win. They shall never pass, never, never, never." Far across the Atlantic on Columbia's sunny soil he had heard the call of his country, and now in that sacred hour he heard the higher call of the Master, who said, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," and with all his heart he entered upon a life of loyal obedience to that call.

Who has not felt the inner urge of the stewardship call of life and property pressing its claims upon him? Have you yielded to those claims? Have you placed your life unreservedly and unalterably at the disposal of the Master? If Christ had your income, what would he do with it? Does he have it? Shall he have it?

CHAPTER VI

THE APPEAL OF PENTECOST

PENTECOST! Glorious Pentecost! The wonderful occasion of the descent and baptism of the Holy Spirit by prophets long foretold! The glad time of the fulfillment of the promise which the Son had received from the Father! The rich reward of the waiting disciples tarrying at Jerusalem in obedience to our Lord's command! The gracious beginning of a new dispensation of spiritual power destined to continue to the end of time! O exalted day and historic season big with supernatural happenings! There is a vital heart-throb of interest at the very mention of the refreshing word "Pentecost." We delight to dwell upon the gift of tongues, the great sermon of the apostle Peter, the conversion of the three thousand, and the consuming passion of the disciples to testify of Jesus—all as marvelous manifestations of the outpouring of the Divine Spirit. Of these we think and speak and hear repeatedly. But the most convincing demonstration of the reality of the new life imparted by the

risen and ascended Christ we have overlooked or avoided. I refer to the attitude of the first believers toward property after the pentecostal baptism. What was that attitude? It is aptly expressed by the historian Luke in the statement: "Neither said any one that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." (Acts iv. 32.)

A Neglected Element in Pentecostal Teaching

The stewardship of material possessions is indeed a neglected element in pentecostal teaching and preaching. Pentecost and property, spiritual power and real estate are related. Evangelical piety must be interpreted in terms of cash as well as in terms of prayer and personal testimony. The idea that a Christian needs only to pray and not to pay is antipentecostal. The testimony of dollars is weightier than the witness of words. The separation of the gospel of grace from the gospel of giving is one of the great tragedies of Christendom. It has grown out of the neglect and befogging of the stewardship teachings of the Bible.

The correct principles and true ideals of the Bible doctrine of stewardship are revealed by a study of the history of the Church at Pentecost. For the stewardship message of Pentecost gathers up and includes all the stewardship teaching that had gone before and is broader than any that came after. The enunciations of the Old Testament were for the benefit of the Hebrew race in its religious infancy and childhood; the utterances of St. Paul were directed to babes in Christ born out of Gentile paganism; but the stewardship message of Pentecost is for the spiritual manhood of the world. O that the Church to-day might rediscover this lost message!

What is the message and appeal of Pentecost? What is its teaching concerning property? What light does it throw on the duty of the twentieth-century Christian? The answer to these inquiries is found in the proper understanding of the stewardship creed and program of the disciples at Pentecost, and the lasting stewardship lessons growing out of that creed and program.

The Stewardship Creed of Pentecost

What was the financial creed of the pentecostal Christians? This creed is negatively stated in the language of St. Luke: "Neither said any one that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." They denied that they were owners of the property to which they held the legal title, and claimed only the right of possession under God. For the first time in history it was made manifest that men should *hold all their substance subject to the call of God*, who is the absolute Owner of all things. Property holders are but stewards appointed to administer for him the trust committed to their care. It was a new conception of property that bloomed at Pentecost, but the flower had been in process of evolution for hundreds of years.

This flower had its roots in the monotheistic faith of the Jewish people. It is inscribed in the very nature and constitution of Theism itself: "The earth is the Lord's; unto man it is given for a possession." The divine ownership was recognized in the laws of the Israelites. The first fruits and firstlings belonged to God as the Giver of all.

The tenth was holy unto him as an acknowledgment of his sovereignty over the whole. The jubilee ordinance was a constant reminder that the land was Jehovah's, for it could not be sold in perpetuity. With remarkable spiritual insight David had said when the people offered so willingly unto the Lord for the building of the temple: "All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." (1 Chron. xxix. 14.) The feasts of the Jews, including the feast of Pentecost, were provided for out of a common fund into which every devout Jew paid a second tithe. Jesus and the twelve had lived a common life and shared a common purse. (John xii. 6, xiii. 29.) When all this teaching and training of the past was vitalized by the coming of the Holy Spirit in power, it culminated in the dawning of a new sense of stewardship.

The Stewardship Program of Pentecost

What was the financial program of the pentecostal Christians? How did their creed affect their conduct in administering material values? "They had all things common." (Acts iv. 32.) "As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought

the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Acts iv. 34, 35.)

The common life of these first believers has been condemned by some as being too generous and lacking in foresight, while it has been hailed by others as the ideal economic program for human society in general. The advocates of both these views are in grave danger of doing violence to the simple narrative. In turning their possessions into money for the common good the property-holding converts were acting under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and we may be sure that the Holy Spirit had a purpose in prompting this unparalleled demonstration of brotherly love. I am profoundly glad that what happened on that occasion did happen; aren't you? How it would have spoiled this wonderful exhibition of Christian love if Peter, or some one of the twelve, had risen up and for reasons of financial prudence and sagacity opposed what was taking place! On the other hand the community of goods as practiced at this time cannot be made the basis of an economic and political system of

government for society everywhere. Such a system involves community of ownership and community of production by the State. But in this case there was only community of distribution and consumption by the Church. The former is a program that must be enforced by law, while the latter was inspired by love. It was a voluntary program, for the right of private property was not abolished, and no one was *required* to sell the accumulations of a lifetime and put the purchase money into the common treasury. It was a temporary program which could continue no longer when the supply of funds was exhausted.

It was never intended that the community program of Pentecost should be permanent. The new sense of stewardship had come to stay, but the particular manner in which it first found expression grew out of the exigencies of the hour. The way of it was natural and reasonable. Multitudes of Jews had come to the annual feast, embraced the faith, and received baptism. Many of these pilgrims, now alienated and estranged because of this way, could not return to their provincial homes for residence, but had to

make new plans for themselves and their families. They were thrifty Jews; but when they had expended their ready cash, they were left without food or shelter. Numbers of converts, now that their whole outlook upon life had been changed, felt the compelling necessity of remaining in Jerusalem for a time in order that they might better qualify themselves to tell of the new doctrine and life in Christ.

Here was an emergency that had come once, and only once, and the like of which might never come again. The Christians who resided in and near Jerusalem met their unique responsibility royally. Swayed by the Spirit, they threw open their doors to the homeless ones, and had all things common.

But even such generous hospitality failed to meet the needs of those momentous days. Converts multiplied, and to provide bread for the hungry the possessors of houses and lands sold them. Some believers from a distance, like Barnabas, made common cause with the local church in this. (Acts iv. 36, 37.) In the ordinary course of his stewardship a wise man would hardly be justified in selling a possession that was being used for

capital. But this was God's method of providing for his own in the hour of their utter extremity and the Church's unparalleled opportunity. Even though they might impoverish themselves (which they did), these Jerusalem Christians would enrich the world for all the coming centuries.

Is it any wonder we find the apostle Paul taking collections in the Gentile churches for the poor saints at Jerusalem? It was not simply because they were poor, but because of the way in which they had become poor. They had rendered a monumental service to Christianity at its inauguration by putting everything they had at the disposal of the Church. No other group of Christians has matched them in their marvelous example of stewardship. No wonder "great grace was upon them all." Such fidelity of stewardship, more than the preaching of the apostles—yea, more than the miracles—proved beyond controversy that the spirit of Jesus was alive in the world. Such is the noble record of the first believers at Pentecost. More than any city of the Gentiles the Jerusalem Church has shown us the full meaning of Christian stewardship, even as it was

fitting for the city of Golgotha and Gethsemane.

The Permanent Stewardship Teaching of Pentecost

What is the permanent stewardship teaching of Pentecost? The financial creed of the pentecostal Christians is the financial creed for the Christians of all time. Property is a sacred trust from God. We are not owners but stewards of the value committed into our hands. The world is indebted to the Hebrews for the right conception of property. The Theistic doctrine of ownership is the true doctrine. Every other doctrine is false, pagan, and heathenish. Gentile Christendom was steeped in the pagan doctrine of ownership from the beginning, and to this day the dark cloud of heathenism obscures the golden sun of pentecostal Christianity among Gentile Christians. The average Christian conscience has been warped from the truth. But this deflection will be corrected and the proper adjustment accomplished by cutting loose from all pagan notions concerning property. We should adopt the financial creed of the pentecostal Christians as our creed, but

this is not all. We must go further than that. It is not difficult to visualize the ideal creed before the eye of the mind, but the real test comes in living up to that vision. We can all dream dreams, but do we realize them? Do we shape our conduct according to our creed? Do we make our life habits conform to our established convictions?

There are two outstanding permanent pentecostal lessons concerning property which every twentieth-century Christian should learn and fulfill.

The Law of the Tithe.

The first of these lessons is the law of the tithe. Pentecost is a confirmation of this law. It is the most emphatic indorsement of tithing to be found anywhere. It is a seal and a sanction of this historic Hebrew custom. All those upon whom the Spirit descended at Pentecost, being pious Jews, were strict and careful tithers, and only among a tithing people could God give such a wonderful exhibition of Christian stewardship. The law of the tithe was not abrogated by the coming of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, but recognized and built upon as the

starting point of stewardship. History bears witness to the tithe. There has never been a time when devout and thankful souls did not offer tithes to God. This is one dutv which the Bible seems to recognize as being in vogue from the beginning. Reason explains the philosophy of the tithe. God's laws are as benevolent in their purpose as his love and mercy. The law of the tithe is the expression of his tender solicitude for his people lest they grow hard and mean in the administration of his gifts. We need to give the tithe far more than he needs to receive it. Revelation stipulates and approves the tithe. All property belongs to God. We are his tenants. It is incumbent upon us to acknowledge his property rights by paying him rent. The ratio is not fixed by the tenant, but by the owner, and the ratio the divine Owner has fixed for us is the tenth. Righteousness is tested by the tithe. Man cannot serve God and gold. There is no single test of whether the love of God or the love of money is stronger in a man's life than his willingness to give habitually at least one-tenth of his income to God. Experience proves the tithe. The only people

competent to testify to the grace of tithing are tithers themselves, and they heartily witness to its practical and spiritual worth. To the children of faith nine-tenths plus God means far more than ten-tenths without him. Better the ninety cents reënforced by divine promise than one hundred cents backed only by selfishness and sin. *Pentecost crowns the tithe.* It honors it as the stepping-stone to the highest stewardship. It invests it with the Spirit's royalty, and dignifies and adorns it with the sanction of the enthroned Christ. In the light of history, reason, revelation, righteousness, and experience, crowned with the glorious effulgence of Pentecost, how can any Christian remain an incurable infidel with reference to the duty of the tithe?

The Stewardship of the Whole

The second outstanding permanent pentecostal lesson concerning property is the stewardship of the whole. The pentecostal Christians renounced ownership interest not only in the tithe but also in the whole of their possessions. They had already paid the first tithe in acknowledgment of the divine sover-

eignty, and the second tithe to provide for the Jewish feasts; and then when the severest test of real stewardship came to the well-to-do converts, they literally laid everything upon God's altar. They gained the mastery over themselves and their material goods. They were pentecostal Christians in deed and in truth. Such stewardship is ever the mark of the supremacy of the spiritual man. The tithe is the recognition, but the whole is the measure of the sacred trust of property. The community of goods passed away, but the principle of community abides. The Christian man's possessions are not to be consumed on individual lust, but administered for the collective good. He is the wisest steward who manages his Lord's estate in the way that will develop the highest and best in himself and those dependent upon him, and achieve the largest good for all mankind.

The law of the tithe is a schoolmaster to bring us to the stewardship of the whole. The practice of tithing is the ladder upon which men begin to climb the high altitudes of Christian stewardship. This practice should never be depreciated nor deprecated, but always commended, even in Pharisees.

Jesus did. We should rather decry the disobedience of those who disregard this duty instead of disparaging the precision of the ones who observe it. The liberty of the Spirit is not the license of lawlessness, but the freedom that comes from the fulfillment of law. The only danger of our being too particular about the tithe is that we shall stop there. There is just *one exception* to the law of the tithe, and that is on the side of the more than one-tenth and not the less than one-tenth. Believers who live up to the spirit of Pentecost and administer their all as stewards of the Lord are no longer bound by the letter of the law. They have learned the lesson of the stewardship of the whole. It would have been unbrotherly for the pentecostal Christians to have scrupulously limited their giving to an exact tenth. The poor widow and Mary of Bethany were excusable for not being rigid tithers. Christians should be Christians to the limit. Men are reluctant to believe in the kind of generosity God expects of his children. The Church is not giving freely enough to receive the fullness of the divine blessings. It is estimated that she is not utilizing more than

about one-seventh of her potential financial ability. The money that belongs to God and is being kept back from him is probably the greatest hindrance to vital spirituality in the world to-day. The day of fully opened treasuries will bring in the day of fully opened heavenly windows. Christianity has the triumphant theology; it has the men; it has the opportunity. It needs God's money that the Bread of Life may be carried to them that perish.

Men of faith should hold aloft the standard of scriptural and ethical stewardship that Christian people everywhere may move toward it. It is in the province of every individual to be a great steward. Will you be one? Every person of means may be a great giver, if he or she chooses. Will you make that choice? The desire to give should develop with the desire and ability to get. The gaining of wealth for the purpose of leaving it to one's family or for pleasure is not a big enough motive to produce the highest type of manhood.

Nathaniel R. Cobb, of Boston, drew up a document which read as follows:

By the grace of God I will never be worth more than fifty thousand dollars.

By the grace of God I will give one-quarter of the net profits of my business to charitable and religious uses.

If I am ever worth twenty thousand dollars, I will give one-half of my net profits.

If I am ever worth thirty thousand dollars, I will give three-quarters, and the whole after fifty thousand dollars.

So help me God, or give to a more faithful steward and set me aside.

This man of God kept a special room in his store for prayer and religious conversation with his customers and friends. His life was cut short at the early age of thirty-six, but on his deathbed he said: "By the grace of God, nothing else, I have been able to give away more than forty thousand dollars. How good the Lord has been to me!"

A missionary in Africa protested against one of the native girls giving her entire wages for three months to missions, saying it was too much. But she replied: "It might be too much for a white man, but not for a black girl who found Jesus within the last year."

On December 12, 1923, Mrs. Mary Couts Burnett conveyed her entire fortune of $4,150,000 to Texas Christian University, Fort

Worth, Tex. This worthy gift is a magnificent expression of pentecostal stewardship.

Men and women of large capital and big business should think and plan in terms of the kingdom of God in their money-making and money-spending, and all alike should learn the lesson of the stewardship of the whole. John Wesley said in his sermon on money: "In spite of nature, and custom, and worldly prudence, give all you can. I do not say, Be a good Jew; giving a tenth of all you possess. I do not say, Be a good Pharisee; giving a fifth of all your substance. I dare not advise you to give half of what you have; no, nor three-quarters; but all. Lift up your hearts, and you will see clearly in what sense this is to be done."

May we be imbued with the spirit of Pentecost and fulfill its lasting lessons concerning property! The pentecostal appeal to-day is for the adoption of a worthy life program. The call that comes to you is for a calm, quiet, deliberate decision, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, to acknowledge God's ownership by setting aside one-tenth of your income, and to take him as your Life Partner in administering the whole of

your possessions. Will you not make that decision, and will you not make it NOW? Will you not say with the poet:

"Lord, I am thine, entirely thine,
Purchased and saved by blood divine;
With full consent thine I would be,
And own thy sovereign right in me.

Thine I would live, thine I would die,
Be thine through all eternity;
The vow is past beyond repeal,
And now I set the solemn seal.

Here, at the cross where flows the blood
That bought my guilty soul for God,
Thee, my new Master, now I call,
And consecrate to thee my all."

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